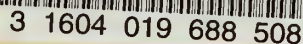



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United States Department of the Interior



1990 State of the Rocky Mountain Region Appendix A – Major Issues



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APPENDIX A MAJOR ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

This appendix supplements the publication "State of the Rocky Mountain Region." It displays major issues currently identified within each State in the Rocky Mountain Region. This appendix is only intended to provide a summary of high priority action items that require attention in the immediate future and is not intended to be all encompassing. Rather it focuses on the primary, critical, or sensitive issues. Included are major initiatives such as facility replacement, external threats mitigation, resource protection needs, both within an outside of parks, new area potentials, and potentials to improve the levels of visitor services. It does not include any assistance grants, funding requests for technical assistance, or assistance to State and local governments and others.

COLORADO

- Lands adjacent to Colorado National Monument, sometimes referred to as Black Ridge, have been recently studied and found to have resources of national significance. Their display of erosional and geologic features are directly related to the purposes of the national monument. These resources deserve special attention and additional protection - protection that will ensure their preservation in perpetuity. This protection may come in the form of additions to Colorado National Monument and its redesignation as a national park, through wilderness designation, or through increased protective management by the Bureau of Land Management. These resources should be protected and it is recognized there are a number of mechanisms that can be used to achieve this end.
- The lower gorge adjacent to Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument has also been recently studied. This area contains resources of national significance, whose displays of geologic faulting are directly related to the national monument. Like the resources adjacent to Colorado National Monument, these resources also deserve further protection. Again, these resources could be protected through a variety of legislative and administrative actions.
- There is a rich legacy of the Anasazi in Southwest Colorado. Their ruins are not completely represented in the National Park System. Considering their national significance, increased levels of protection and management are warranted. A recently completed study for the area identified several alternatives to accomplish this end. Increased protection of these resources through addition to the National Park System or other means should be pursued.
- About 38 percent of the boundary of Rocky Mountain National Park is contiguous with private lands. The park's resources are being threatened by encroaching subdivisions

and other development. Management of the park is dependent on recognizing the wholeness that composes the resource ecosystem. Though a recent addition has been completed, a comprehensive park boundary study is needed to determine if present boundaries are adequate, and if not, what alternatives are available to mitigate resource threats.

- A majority of visitors to the east side of Rocky Mountain National Park enter via U.S. highway 34 through the Fall River entrance. Existing facilities at this location are completely inadequate and are deteriorating. There is no opportunity to provide visitor information services and reduce congestion at the entrance facility. Planning for new facilities at Fall River has been recently completed. There is a need to obtain funding necessary to construct facilities to reduce congestion, increase public awareness of the park's fragile and unique resources, improve management of visitor use, and provide park operational support.

- Curecanti National Recreation Area is managed under a memorandum of understanding with the Bureau of Reclamation. Legislative establishment is required before the area can be recognized and managed as an official area of the National Park System. Establishment is supported by the NPS.

- Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument uses a rehabilitated farmhouse as a visitor center, which is inadequate. The structure is small and in poor structural condition, there is simply not enough space to accommodate visitors and exhibits inadequately portray the significance of the area. Initial development is needed to serve the visitor into the next century and provide interpretive and educational programs. The park has never received initial development funds to make it operational.

- The Bureau of Reclamation has prepared an environmental impact statement to analyze potential impacts associated with the AB Lateral Hydropower Facility. If constructed, the project would divert up to 1,135 cubic feet-per-second of water from the Gunnison River to the Uncompahgre River through the existing Gunnison Tunnel. This project would reduce the flow of the Gunnison River up to 70 percent through Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument. Diverting 70 percent of the total flow of the Gunnison River will impact resources and values of the national monument as well as the lower gorge, which is being considered for addition to the monument. The National Park Service is opposed to the project and feels, at a minimum, there is a need to collect additional baseline data to document specific changes that would occur.

- The visitor center for Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument has been identified for replacement for many years, however, funds from the Servicewide construction program have not been available. Much interest in the replacement of this facility has been expressed by local officials. A new facility on the South Rim, would enhance visitor experiences and understandings of the national monument.

- Current access to Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site is via Colorado Highway 194. This results in confused access for the visitor. Local officials have expressed interest in providing a direct access route from U.S. highway 50, which they feel would increase

visitation to the site while enhancing tourism in southeast Colorado. Planning should be conducted, which evaluates how this proposal will affect visitor facilities and services, and which incorporates interpretive objectives of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

- The 1986 general management plan for Dinosaur National Monument concluded that the area's resources warrant national park status. Legislation is required to redesignate the national monument as a national park, thereby giving it the recognition it deserves.
- Visitors to Mesa Verde National Park must travel about 17 miles into the park before interpretive and orientation facilities are available. The park's 1979 general management plan identified the need to construct a visitor/research center near the park's entrance. The facility would provide visitor information on Anasazi sites throughout southwest Colorado and would replace a 1950s research center, which is inadequate, although it provides storage for the park's millions of artifacts.
- Resources within Hovenweep National Monument represent the climax of Anasazi occupation of Cajon Mesa. Previous settlement areas and related farming sites are on surrounding lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. These resources are essential to provide the full interpretive story to visitors and require additional protective management and research. Multiple-use management activities have the potential to limit future management options. Management that retains options should be implemented. This can be accomplished by boundary expansion and NPS management or by BLM management conducted in cooperation with the NPS. In the latter case, detailed protective actions need to be developed and incorporated in BLM's overall management strategies. Resources at Goodman Point are different from those at Hovenweep's other units. Many of the archeological ruins are located outside of present boundaries. Recent facility developments in the area point to the need to pursue boundary expansion for this unit in the near future. This action is supported by the BLM.
- Visitation to Great Sand Dunes National Monument has significantly increased since construction of its present visitor center. This facility does not have adequate space to provide interpretive programs for this increased use. This facility should be expanded to accommodate increased use and interpret the national monument's resources.
- Lands adjacent to Great Sand Dunes National Monument include portions of active dunes and resources that complement the significance of the national monument. A study to determine the necessity or feasibility of a boundary change that would incorporate these portions and adjacent watersheds and topographically manageable sections should be completed.
- Facilities at Curecanti were constructed under Section 8 of the Colorado River Storage Act. Adequate funds for maintenance of these facilities have not been made available. The park's operating base funds require increases for operation and maintenance of these facilities.
- Roads and trails at Rocky Mountain National Park have suffered from deferred maintenance, owing to a lack of funds. Operational increases are required to maintain

quality conditions of roads and trails.

- Yucca House National Monument, 9.6 acres in size, consists of Anasazi valley pueblo ruins. Present boundaries do not encompass all the ruins and there is no land available to accommodate visitor use or site management. The landowner has indicated a willingness to donate adjacent lands to the United States. Legislation is required to expand the boundary and enable acceptance of the donation.

MONTANA

- Resources and historic settings associated with the Battle of the Little Bighorn are not contained within present boundaries of Custer Battlefield National Monument. The monument's 1986 general management plan identified the need to expand boundaries by some 11,800 acres. Legislation to accomplish this boundary adjustment is needed.
- For many years some people have pointed out the need to recognize Native American perspectives pertaining to the Battle of the Little Bighorn. In response to this, the National Park Service formed an Indian Memorial Committee to identify options for establishment of an Indian Memorial at the national monument. That committee recommended that a memorial be established and funded by Congress.
- A Trans-Park Road to link the north and south districts of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area has been proposed for years. This road would cross Crow Tribal lands added to the park by Memorandum of Agreement. This agreement is under dispute and requires resolution before the Trans-Park Road proposal can be pursued.
- Concession facilities at Glacier National Park are in ill-repair with the park concessioners holding a possessory interest in these facilities. Acquisition of these facilities by the National Park Service would provide an opportunity to establish a capital improvement and maintenance program modeled after those existing at Yellowstone National Park. Funding to accomplish the acquisition and rehabilitation is required.
- No major visitor orientation or interpretive center exists for the West Side of Glacier National Park. Recognition that the future of Glacier must rely on concepts that consider the entire Northern Continental Divide ecosystem is growing. Officials of the U. S. Forest Service and Glacier National Park have entered into a cooperative venture to explore options that would address these needs. Implementation of the concept will require development and operation of a joint facility.
- Montana resources, such as Virginia City, represent themes not adequately represented in the National Park System -- "Westward Expansion - America's Mining Frontier". These resources require evaluation to determine suitability and feasibility of assistance for management, protection, and interpretation from the National Park Service.
- The National Park Service's Pacific Northwest Regional Office is completing an additions study for Nez Perce National Historical Park. That study included several

recommendations, including addition of the State-owned, Bear's Paw Battleground to Nez Perce National Historic Park and placing the administration of the existing National Park System unit, Big Hole National Battlefield, under the historic park. If implemented, these areas, located in the State of Montana, would be administered by a manager located in Idaho receiving policy direction from the Pacific Northwest Regional Office. Because other National Park System units in Montana are under the general administration of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, retaining that relationship for all units located in Montana would facilitate continuance of cooperative working relationships with the State and other local interests.

NORTH DAKOTA

- Knife River Indian Villages is currently served by a visitor/administrative facility that is a rehabilitated farmhouse. Efforts by the North Dakota congressional delegation have resulted in design of new facilities and the construction of utilities. There may be a need for additional funding to complete the interpretive exhibits, replica earthlodge, and related visitor service improvements.
- Legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate to expand the boundary of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site. The proposal would add about 465 acres of land to the national historic site. These lands contain significant archeological resources, which are primary to purposes of the park and are also valuable from the context of retaining the area's historic setting. The National Park Service supports the boundary adjustment proposal and feels addition of the lands will enhance future management and protection of the historic site.
- The North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park uses a modular trailer for visitor contact and interpretation. The planning is underway for a new facility, funded by Friends of the Park. Additional resources and funds will be needed to complete the final phases of this project.
- Reconstruction of many historic facilities at Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site is near completion. Increased operating funds will be needed to operate and maintain these new and expanded facilities, and to provide curation and interpretation of the thousands of objects collected during the archeological survey that supported the reconstruction.
- International Peace Garden, a National Park System affiliated area, has a master plan completed in the early 1960s. The master plan is outdated and requires revisions to respond to changing issues and demands. Technical assistance to accomplish this revision is required from the National Park Service, but is not available within current funding levels.
- The State recently restored and rehabilitated portions of Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park. The Custer Trail, which begins at the fort and extends to the site of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, should be studied to determine its role in the history of the fort and the

Indian wars of the west, including feasibility of NPS assistance.

SOUTH DAKOTA

- The sculptures of Mount Rushmore may be threatened by continued weathering. A structural analysis of the sculptures is ongoing to help determine long-term preservation needs. Funding to address preservation needs may be necessary.
- Facilities at Mount Rushmore were not designed to accommodate the more than two million visitors who travel to the memorial each year. Efforts are underway to plan and construct new facilities that will carry the memorial into the next century. Efforts to complete this task must continue through Federal appropriations and private donations.
- Studies of Jewel Cave National Monument's cave systems have revealed a network of caves much larger than originally thought. Many miles of the caves extend beyond the monument's boundary. The extensiveness of this system presents opportunities to further evaluate the caves for designation as the nation's first underground wilderness and to establish a process to manage the surface activities above those portions of the cave that are outside of established boundaries.
- Recent planning for the South Unit of Badlands National Park identified the need for a visitor center. Current system-wide construction priorities will prohibit completion of the project in the foreseeable future. Options to fund such an effort need to be explored. The North Unit's visitor center is outdated and requires rehabilitation. The success of this project also depends on our abilities to identify optional funding sources.
- General regulations of the National Park Service prohibit commercial vehicles on roads within units of the National Park System. Badlands National Park recognizes that a total ban on commercial vehicles would unduly impact local communities and agricultural interests whose only reasonable access to Interstate 90 is through the park. Historically this local traffic has been allowed on park roads. There is a need to develop a special regulation for commercial traffic through Badlands National Park.

UTAH

- Planning for minimal facilities necessary to manage the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park is nearing completion. Initial construction funds have been obtained but additional funds will be required to complete this project.
- The State of Utah has proposed a land exchange to consolidate State ownership of lands with Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The National Park Service recognizes that the State needs to exchange scattered lands in national park units to enhance their economic benefits, but feels the recent proposal would lead to long-term degradation of park resources. Exchange programs with the Bureau of Land Management or other approaches should be pursued to help meet the State's objectives.

- Visitation to Zion National Park has grown significantly. There are more than two million visitors to Zion each year. This increased visitation has created traffic congestion problems in the narrow confines of Zion Canyon. This situation is creating resource damage and degradation of visitor experiences, and is limiting many visitors' opportunities to explore some of the park's spectacular resources. In 1989, the National Park Service completed an Interim Visitor Transportation Plan for the canyon in hopes of mitigating effects of the current situation. Funds to acquire and operate the proposed transportation system are necessary if the issue is to be addressed.
- Visitation to Glen Canyon National Recreation Area now exceeds three million visitors annually. Park operational base funds are insufficient to respond to these growing demands. There is a need to increase the park's operational base or seek mechanisms that would allow the collection and retention of entrance or user fees to help supplement the park's budget.
- Planning documents for Arches and Canyonlands National Parks have identified the need to build a visitor center, which would serve both parks, near the Arches entrance. The present facility is undersized and does not have the capability to serve both areas. As described in the 1989 Arches general management plan, replacement of this facility should be pursued.
- Operational base funds for Canyonlands National Park have not kept pace with expanded visitation and development. Recently paved road access and new developments at the Island-in-the-Sky District and facilities under construction at the Needles District require funds for operation and maintenance.
- A Federal Energy Regulatory water power project has been proposed on the Fremont River upstream of Capitol Reef National Park. The project would involve construction of an earthen dam and would create a reservoir of 1,029 surface acres. The National Park Service is concerned that the proposal would significantly impact park resources and values. Major impacts identified include altering water temperature, changing sediment movement and particulate matter, altering microinvertebrate composition, and changing recreational use patterns. Before decisions are made on this potential project, substantial collection and analysis of baseline data should be completed.
- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has completed a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for construction of an airport at Halls Crossing, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The airport would replace a 3,500-foot-long gravel airstrip used primarily for administrative purposes, but is also open to the public. The National Park Service has identified a need to replace the airstrip with a facility designed to accommodate General Utility Stage I aircraft. The FAA has identified a proposal to construct an airport on BLM lands adjacent to Halls Crossing. Overflights and noise associated with airport use has the potential to impact the visitors and resources of Glen Canyon. Management believes the draft EIS did not adequately analyze these potential impacts.
- The Bureau of Reclamation is preparing an environmental impact statement for

operation of the Glen Canyon Dam. Analysis is limited to impacts along the Colorado River below the dam. This region is concerned about the impacts to Lake Powell created by fluctuating water levels. We believe analysis should be expanded to determine how park infrastructures, visitors, and the local economy will be affected by changes in dam operations. Should water levels prohibit use of facilities such as boat launch ramps, visitation could decrease, which would have a significant impact on the region's tourism-based economy.

- The National Park Service recently completed a road system evaluation for Bryce Canyon National Park. That evaluation revealed that roads serving the park's southern scenic drive are in a deteriorating condition, with road widths insufficient to accommodate recreation vehicles and buses. Also, scenic pullouts are located immediately adjacent to the road, requiring vehicles to back into the main travelway. Funds are necessary for road rehabilitation and correction of deficiencies.

WYOMING

- Examples of World War II history are limited within the National Park System. The Heart Mountain Japanese Internment Camp in Wyoming was the second largest city in the State during occupation. This resource should be studied to determine its suitability and feasibility for addition to the National Park System. Such an addition has the potential to diversify the tourism-based economy of Park County.

- Wyoming has the distinction of having the Nation's first national park--Yellowstone--as well as the first national monument--Devils Tower. A museum or interpretive center dedicated to the legacy and ideals of the national park idea does not exist. Opportunities to establish such a facility, perhaps in Yellowstone, should be pursued.

- A new visitor/administrative facility has been constructed at Fossil Butte National Monument. Funds to staff and maintain this facility are needed if visitor services and experience are to be meaningful as well as beneficial to the community.

- Planning for a joint Yellowstone/Grand Teton National Park winter use plan is ongoing. This plan will address the proposed Wyoming Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail and other significant winter use issues. Funds will be needed to complete the planning and to possibly implement the proposals, depending on the alternative selected.

- Roads within Yellowstone National Park require major rehabilitation to serve the visitor into the next century. This work has been identified as the region's highest construction priority, yet it appears funding for the rehabilitation may not be available in the foreseeable future. There is a need to obtain road rehabilitation funding as soon as possible to avoid further deterioration and road rehabilitation expense.

- Management of Yellowstone's fisheries lacks adequate funding. Opportunities exist to explore mechanisms that would allow charging for park fishing permits, with retention of fees in the park to supplement the fisheries program.

- Phase out of most overnight use at Fishing Bridge in Yellowstone National Park provided for rehabilitation of the Bridge Bay Campground to provide full and modern services. Funds will be necessary to complete this work. It is also necessary to obtain funding to replace campsites (about 320) eliminated from the Fishing Bridge campground.
- The Rocky Mountain grey wolf was once an integral part of the Yellowstone ecosystem. Reintroduction of the species will help provide an ecological balance to the area. Environmental and other studies to determine impacts of this action must be continued before final decisions on this sensitive issue can be reached.
- Utility infrastructure, particularly sewer systems, of both the Canyon and Madison developed areas at Yellowstone National Park require rehabilitation or replacement. These improvements are required to prevent pollution of park resources and to help the park meet visitor use needs and wastewater standards into the future. Funds to complete this work are necessary.
- Winter habitat for northern elk and bison herds in Yellowstone is limited. The establishment of wildlife management programs that minimize conflicts and provide long-term protection for these species must be pursued with the State. It is also necessary to continue authorization of funding to acquire critical range outside the park.

REGIONWIDE

- Aircraft overflights of national park units have the potential to impact sensitive cultural and geologic values, degrade visitor experiences in backcountry areas, and impact manmade elements, such as the sculptures of Mount Rushmore. There is a need to identify and officially establish minimum altitudes of overflights in some critical national park units.
- The region's road network requires constant rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Federal Lands Highway Program has been the primary tool used to respond to these needs. This program must be retained at levels to accomplish ongoing work and to eliminate backlogs of road rehabilitation and reconstruction work.
- Pressure from local communities, interest groups, and tourism industries for special resource studies (i.e., resource assessments and new area studies) has been increasing, yet there is no program to respond to these needs. If the NPS is to be responsive, there is a need to establish a special resource planning and study program to address these needs and to provide technical assistance to local and State governments.
- Parks have obtained budget increases, however, these increases have not kept pace with increased visitation and lengthening use seasons. Also, new development, increased emphasis on archeological protection, aging infrastructures, and deteriorating infrastructures all require funding. Because funding is not sufficient to address this changing situation, basic operations are suffering. Mechanisms to increase park

operating funds need to be explored and implemented.

- Regional funds for park research projects have steadily declined over the last decade due to increased costs for staff and travel, competition from other programs, increased administrative assessments, and other reductions. There is a need to obtain resources to conduct research programs.
- The National Park Service will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 1991, commemorating creation of the Service by the signing of the Organic Act on August 25, 1916. The celebration and environmental awareness, both nationally and worldwide, would benefit from a Congressional Resolution recognizing this most important event.

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